Purgatory Stories

The Immerse Power Of The Holy Mass For The Souls In Purgatory

From the excellent book "Purgatory –Explained by the Lives and Legends of the Saints" by Father F.X. Schouppe, S.J., Tan Books, 1986 we read the following accounts which highlight the power and importance of offering holy Masses for the departed. The following is a sincere testimony from the person who experienced several visits from a soul in purgatory, and thus she provides a detailed and frank eye-witness account with regard to the facts:

On October 13, 1849, there died at the age of fifty-two, in the parish of Ardoye, in Flanders, a woman named Eugenie Van de Kerckove, whose husband, John Wybo, was a farmer. She was a pious and charitable woman who generously gave to charity in proportionate to her means. She had, to the end of her life, a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and abstained from meat in her honor on the Friday and Saturday of each week. Although her conduct was not free from certain faults, she otherwise led an exemplary and edifying life.

Eugenie had a servant named Barbara Vennecke, aged twenty-eight, who was known as a virtuous and devoted girl, and who had assisted her mistress in her last sickness, and after Eugenie's death, she continued to serve her master, John Wybo, the widower of Eugenie.

About three weeks after her death, the deceased appeared to her servant under circumstances which we will now relate. It was in the middle of the night; Barbara slept soundly, when she heard herself called distinctly three times by her name. She awoke with a start, and saw Eugenie before her, sitting on the side of her bed, clad in a working dress, consisting of a skirt and short jacket. At this remarkable sight, Barbara was seized with astonishment. The apparition spoke to her: *"Barbara,"* she said, simply pronouncing her name. *"What do you desire, Eugenie?"* replied the servant.

'Please take," said the mistress, *"the little rake which I often told you to put in its place; stir the heap of sand in the little room; you know to which one I refer. You will find there 500 franks; use it to*

have Masses said, two francs for each Mass, for my intention, for I am still suffering." "I will do so, Eugenie," replied Barbara, and at the same moment the apparition vanished. After awhile she fell asleep again, and reposed quietly until morning:

On awaking, Barbara thought that maybe it was all just a dream, but yet she had been so deeply impressed, so wide awake, she had seen her old mistress in a form so distinct, so full of life and she had received from her lips such precise directions, that she could not help saying, *"This cannot have been a dream. I saw my mistress in person; she presented herself to my eyes and she surely spoke to me. It is no dream, but a reality."*

She therefore immediately went and took the rake as directed, stirred the sand, and drew out a purse containing the sum of five hundred francs.

In such strange and extraordinary circumstances the good girl thought it her duty to seek the advice of her pastor before spending the 500 francs on having Masses said, and went to relate to him all that had happened. The venerable Abbe R., then parish priest of Ardoye, replied that the Masses asked by the departed soul absolutely must be celebrated, but, in order to dispose of the sum of money, the consent of the husband, John Wybo, was necessary, since the money was found in his house. The latter willingly consented that the money should be employed for so holy a purpose, and the Masses were celebrated, being given two francs for each Mass.

We call attention to the circumstance of the Mass donations, because it corresponded with the pious cus¬tom of the deceased. The fee for a Mass fixed by the diocese at that time was a franc and a half, but during her lifetime Eugenie-through consideration and charity for the clergy, many of whom were quite poor- always gave two francs for each Mass that she made offerings for. Thus the extra 1/2 a frank Mass offering that she normally made was an act of charity and additional financial support for the priests who celebrated them.

Two months after the first apparition, while Masses were still being said for Eugenie's intentions, Barbara was again awakened during the night. This time her chamber was illuminated with a bright light, and her mistress appeared before her with a radiant smile, beautiful and fresh in appearance as in the days of her youth, and was dressed in a robe of dazzling whiteness—*"Barbara,"* she said in a clear voice, *"I thank you! For I am now delivered from the place of purification.'*Saying these words, she disappeared, and the chamber became dark as before.

The servant, amazed at what she had just seen, was full of joy, and she soon spread the remarkable story to everyone about the town . This apparition made the most lively impression upon her mind, and she pre¬serves to this day the most consoling remembrance of it. It is from her that we have these details, through the favor of the venerable Abbe L., who was curate at Ardoye when these facts occurred.

This is but one of the many stories in regards to the power and efficacy of the Holy Mass wherein the Son of God Himself offers Himself upon the altar for the forgiveness of our sins, for it is a fact that of all that we can do in favor of the souls in Purgatory, there is nothing more powerful and precious than the offering of immolation of our Divine Saviour upon the altar. Besides being the express doctrine of the Church as manifested in her Councils, there are many mirac¬ulous facts, properly authenticated, which leave no room for doubt in regard to this point.

A Priest's Visions Of Heaven, Hell And Purgatory.

A Priest (Fr. Jose Maniyagat) Who Saw Heaven, Hell And Purgatory.

Here is his personal testimony:

"I was born on July 16, 1949 in Kerala, India to my parents, Jospeh and Theresa Maniyagat. I am the eldest of seven children: Jose, Mary, Theresa, Lissama, Zachariah, Valsa and Tom.

At the age of fourteen, I entered St. Mary's Minor Seminary in Thiruvalla to begin my studies for the priesthood. Four years later, I went to St Jospeh's Pontifical Major Seminary in Alwaye, Kerala to continue my priestly formation.

After completing the seven years of philosophy and theology, I was ordained a priest on January 1, 1975 to serve as a missionary in the Diocese of Thiruvalla.

On Sunday April 14, 1985, the Feast of the Divine Mercy, I was going to celebrate Mass at a mission church in the north part of Kerala, and I had a fatal accident. I was riding a motorcycle when I was hit head-on by a jeep driven by a man who was intoxicated after a Hindu festival. I was rushed to a hospital about 35 miles away. On the way, my soul came out from my body and I experienced death. Immediately, I met my Guardian Angel. I saw my body and the people who were carrying me to the hospital. I heard them crying and praying for me. at this time my angel told me:

"I am going to take you to Heaven, the Lord wants to meet you and talk with you."

He also said that, on the way, he wanted to show me hell and purgatory.

HELL

First, the angel escorted me to hell. It was an awful sight! I saw Satan and the devils, an unquenchable fire of about 2000 degrees Fahrenheit, worms crawling over people screaming and fighting, others being tortured by demons. The angel told me that all these sufferings were due to unrepented mortal sins. Then, I understood that there are seven degrees of suffering or levels according to the number and kinds of mortal sins committed in their earthly lives. The souls looked very ugly, cruel and horrific. It was a fearful experience. I saw people whom I knew, but I am not allowed to reveal their identities.

The sins that convicted them were mainly abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, hatefulness, unforgiveness and sacrilege. The angel told me that if they had repented, they would have avoided hell and gone instead to purgatory. I also understood that some people who repent from these sins might be purified on earth through their sufferings. This way they can avoid purgatory and go straight to heaven.

I was surprised when I saw in hell even priests and bishops, some of whom I never expected to see. Many of them were there because they had misled the people with false teaching and bad example.

PURGATORY

After the visit to hell, my Guardian Angel escorted me to purgatory. Here too, there are seven degrees of suffering and unquenchable fire. But it is far less intense than hell and there was neither quarrelling nor fighting. The main suffering of these souls is their separation from God. Some of those who are in purgatory committed numerous mortal sins, but they were reconciled with God before their death. Even though these souls are suffering, they enjoy peace and the knowledge that one day they will see God face to face.

I had a chance to communicate with the souls in purgatory. They asked me to pray for them and to tell the people to pray for them as well, so they can go to heaven quickly.

When we pray for these souls, we will receive their gratitude through their prayers, and once they enter heaven, their prayers become even more meritorious.

MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

It is difficult for me to describe how beautiful my Guardian Angel is. He is radiant and bright. He is my constant companion and helps me in all my ministries, especially my healing ministry. I

experience his presence everywhere I go and I am grateful for his protection in my daily life.

HEAVEN

Next, my angel escorted me to heaven passing through a big dazzling white tunnel. I never experienced this much peace and joy in my life. Then immediately heaven opened up and I heard the most delightful music, which I never heard before. The angels were singing and praising God. I saw all the saints, especially the Blessed Mother and St Joseph, and many dedicated holy Bishops and priests who were shining like stars.

And when I appeared before the Lord, Jesus told me:

"I want you to go back to the world. In your second life, you will be an instrument of peace and healing to My people. You will walk in a foreign land and you will speak in a foreign tongue. Everything is possible for you with My grace."
After these words, the Blessed Mother told me:

"Do whatever He tells you. I will help you in your ministries."

Words cannot express the beauty of heaven. There we find so much peace and happiness, which exceed a million times our imagination.

OUR LORD JESUS & HIS BLESSED MOTHER MARY.

Our Lord is far more beautiful than any image can convey. His face is radiant and luminous and more beautiful than a thousand rising suns. The pictures we see in the world are only a shadow of His magnificence. The Blessed Mother was next to Jesus; She was so beautiful and radiant. None of the images we see in this world can compare with her real beauty.

Heaven is our real home; we are created to reach heaven and enjoy God forever. Then, I came back to the world with my angel. While my body was at the hospital, the doctor completed all

examinations and I was pronounced dead. The cause of death was bleeding. My family was notified, and since they were far away, the hospital staff decided to move my dead body to the morgue. Because the hospital did not have air conditioners, they were concerned that the body would decompose quickly. As they were moving my dead body to the morgue, my soul came back to the body. I felt an excruciating pain because of so many wounds and broken bones. I began to scream, and then the people became frightened and ran away screaming. One of them approached the doctor and said: *"The dead body is screaming."* The doctor came to examine the body and found that I was alive. So he said: *"Father is alive, it is a miracle! Take him back to the hospital."*

Now, back at the hospital, they gave me blood transfusions and I was taken to surgery to repair the broken bones. They worked on my lower jaw, ribs, pelvic bone, wrists, and right leg. After two months, I was released from the hospital, but my orthopaedic doctor said that I would never walk again. I then said to him: *"The Lord who gave me my life back and sent me back to the world will heal me."* Once at home, we were all praying for a miracle. Still after a month, and with the casts removed, I was not able to move.

But one day while I was praying I felt an extraordinary pain in my pelvic area. After a short while the pain disappeared completely and I heard a voice saying: *"You are healed. Get up and walk."* I felt the peace and healing power on my body. I immediately got up and walked. I praised and thanked God for the miracle.

I reached my doctor with the news of my healing, and he was amazed. He said: *"Your God is the true God. I must follow your God."* The doctor was Hindu, and he asked me to teach him about our Church. After studying the Faith, I baptized him and he became Catholic.

Following the message from my Guardian Angel, I came to the United States on November 10, 1986 as a missionary priest…Since

June 1999, I have been pastor of St. Mary's Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Maclenny, Florida."
NOTE: From June 1999 to June 2011, Father Jose Maniyangat was Pastor of St. Mary's Mother of Mercy Catholic church in Macclenny, Florida. He was also the Catholic Chaplain for Florida State Prison in Starke, Union Correctional Institution in Raiford and Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny.

On July 2011 Father Jose was transferred to St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Orange Park, Florida.
Father Jose retired April 15, 2016 from active parish duties to full time Healing Ministry with the Bishop's approval and permission to be able to share his ministry invested to him by God with people around the world. He will have more freedom to serve the people. He will remain in the Jacksonville, Florida area.

He shared this testimony when he was still pastor at St. Mary's Mother of Mercy Catholic Church, Macclenny, Florida.

A Trip To Purgatory

PURGATORY SHOWN TO ST. FRANCES OF ROME

It has pleased God to show in spirit the gloomy abodes of Purgatory to some privileged souls, who were to reveal the sorrowful mysteries thereof for the edification of the faithful. Of this number was the illustrious St. Frances, foundress of the Oblates, who died in Rome in 1440. God favored her with great lights concerning the state of souls in the other life. She saw Hell and its horrible torments; she saw also the interior of Purgatory, and the mysterious order—I had almost said hierarchy of expiations— which reigns in this portion of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In obedience to her superiors, who thought themselves bound to impose this obligation upon her, she made known all that God had manifested to her; and her visions, written at the request of the venerable Canon Matteotti, her spiritual director, have all the authenticity that can be desired in such matters. Now, the servant of God declared that, after having endured with unspeakable horror

the vision of Hell, she came out of that abyss and was conducted by Her celestial guide into the regions of Purgatory. There reigned neither horror nor disorder, nor despair nor eternal darkness; there divine hope diffused its light, and she was told that this place of purification was called also “sojourn of hope”. She saw there souls which suffered cruelly, but angels visited and assisted them in their sufferings.

Purgatory, she said, is divided into three distinct parts, which are as the three large provinces of that kingdom of suffering. They are situated the one beneath the other, and occupied by souls of different orders. These souls are buried more deeply in proportion as they are more defiled and farther removed from the time of their deliverance.

The lowest region is filled with a fierce fire, but which is not dark like that of Hell; it is a vast burning sea, throwing forth immense flames. Innumerable souls are plunged into its depths: they are those who have rendered themselves guilty of mortal sin, which they have duly confessed, but not sufficiently expiated during life. The servant of God then learned that, for all forgiven mortal sin, there remains to be undergone a suffering of seven years. This term cannot evidently be taken to mean a definite measure, since mortal sins differ in enormity, but as an average penalty. Although the souls are enveloped in the same flames, their sufferings are not the same; they differ according to the number and nature of their former sins.

In this lower Purgatory the saint beheld laity and persons consecrated to God. The laity were those who, after a life of sin, had had the happiness of being sincerely converted; the persons consecrated to God were those who had not lived according to the sanctity of their state. At that same moment she saw descend the soul of a priest whom she knew, but whose name she does not reveal. She remarked that he had his face covered with a veil which concealed a stain. Although he had led an edifying life, this priest had not always observed strict temperance, and had sought too eagerly the satisfactions of the table.

The saint was then conducted into the intermediate Purgatory, destined for souls which had deserved less rigorous chastisement. It had three distinct compartments; one resembled an immense dungeon of ice, the cold of which was indescribably intense; the second, on the contrary, was like a huge cauldron of boiling oil and pitch; the third had the appearance of a pond of liquid metal resembling molten gold or silver.

The upper Purgatory, which the saint does not describe, is the temporary abode of souls which suffer little, except the pain of loss, and approach the happy moment of their deliverance.

Such, in substance, is the vision of St. Frances relative to Purgatory.

…to be continued

Purgatory Stories (1)

PURGATORY AND THE DEATH

Purgatory has been a great resource of humanity. The idea that it is possible to redeem evil with good actions also for one's own dead, it is brilliant: it deletes the impassable limit of death, it balances earth injustices and gives a positive power to all the actions.

"I know when you pray for me, and it is the same with all of the other souls here in Purgatory. Very few of us here get any prayers; the majority of us are totally abandoned, with no thought or prayers offered for us from those on earth" (Message from a soul in Purgatory)

ST. PADRE PIO'S VISIONS OF THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

In May, 1922, Padre Pio testified the following to the Bishop of Melfi, His Excellency Alberto Costa and also the superior of the friary, Padre Lorenzo of San Marco along with 5 other friars. One of the five friars, Fra Alberto D' Apolito of San Giovanni Rotondo wrote down the account as follows:

"While in the friary on a winter afternoon after a heavy snowfall, he (Padre Pio) *was sitting by the fireplace one evening in the guest room, absorbed in prayer, when an old man, wearing an old-fashioned cloak still worn by southern Italian peasants at the time, sat down beside him. Concerning this man Pio states:*

'I could not imagine how he could have entered the friary at this time of night since all the doors are locked. I questioned him: 'Who are you? What do you want?'

The old man told him,

"Padre Pio, I am Pietro Di Mauro, son of Nicola, nicknamed Precoco."

He went on to say,

"I died in this friary on the 18th of September, 1908, in cell number 4, when it was still a poorhouse. One night, while in bed, I fell asleep with a lighted cigar, which ignited the mattress and I died, suffocated and burned. I am still in Purgatory. I need a holy Mass in order to be freed. God permitted that I come and ask you for help."

According to Padre Pio:

"After listening to him, I replied, 'Rest assured that tomorrow I will celebrate Mass for your liberation.' I arose and accompanied him to the door of the friary, so that he could leave. I did not realize at that moment that the door was closed and locked: I opened it and bade him farewell The moon lit up the square, covered with snow. When I no longer saw him in front of me, I was taken by a sense of fear, and I closed the door, reentered the guest room, and felt faint."

<u>Purgatory Stories (2)</u>

Padre Pio told Fra Alberto of another apparition of a soul from Purgatory which also occurred around the same time.

Fra Alberto D' Apolito of San Giovanni Rotondo wrote down the account as told by Padre Pio:

"One evening, when I was absorbed in prayer in the choir of the little church I was shaken and disturbed by the sound of footsteps, and candles and flower vases being moved on the main altar. Thinking that someone must be there, I called out, "Who is it?"

No one answered. Returning to prayer, I was again disturbed by the same noises. In fact, this time I had the impression that one of the candles, which was in front of the statue of Our Lady of Grace, *had fallen. Wanting to see what was happening on the altar, I stood up, went close to the grate and saw, in the shadow of the light of the Tabernacle lamp, a young confrere doing some cleaning. I yelled out,*

"What are you doing in the dark?"

The little friar answered,
"I am cleaning."

"You clean in the dark?" I asked.
"Who are you?"

The little friar said,
'I am a Capuchin novice, who spends his time of Purgatory here. I am in need of prayers.' and then he disappeared,"

Padre Pio stated that he immediately began praying for him as requested, and it is not known if he had any further dealings with this particular soul. However, in regards souls in Purgatory it is very interesting to note that later in life Padre Pio once said that: *"As many souls of the dead come up this road [to the monastery] as that of the souls of the living."*

Without a doubt, many souls from Purgatory visited Padre Pio seeking his prayers, sacrifices and sufferings to obtain their release.

PRAYER: Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them O Lord, And Let Your Perpetual Light Shine On Them. May The Rest In Peace. Amen.

Purgatory Stories (3)

LIDWINA'S VISION OF PURGATORY.

St. Lidwina of Schiedam was a 15th century Dutch saint and mystic. As a teenager, she had an ice skating accident that left her debilitated the rest of her life. A sinful man was converted by her prayers and and exhortation and was able to make a good confession, but he died soon after, unable to do much penance. After some time, she asked her guardian angel if he was still in Purgatory, and she had this vision:

SHE MISTOOK PURGATORY FOR HELL

"'He is there,' said her angel, *'and he suffers much. Would you be willing to endure some pain in order to diminish his?' Certainly,'* she replied, *'I am ready to suffer anything to assist him.'*

Instantly her angel conducted her into a place of frightful torture. *'Is this, then, Hell, my brother?'* asked the holy maiden, seized with horror. *'No, sister,'*answered the angel, *'but this part of Purgatory is bordering upon Hell.'*

TERRORS OF PURGATORY

"Looking around on all sides, she saw what resembled an immense prison, surrounded with walls of a prodigious height, the blackness of which, together with the monstrous stones, inspired her with horror. Approaching this dismal enclosure, she heard a confused noise of lamenting voices, cries of fury, chains, instruments of torture, violent blows which the executioners discharged upon their victims. This noise was such that all the tumult of the world, in tempest or battle, could bear no comparison to it. *'What, then, is that horrible place?'* asked St. Lidwina of her good angel. *'Do you wish me to show it to you?' 'No, I beseech you,'* said she, recoiling with terror; *'the noise which I hear is so frightful that I*

can no longer bear it ; how, then, could I endure the sight of those horrors?'

"Continuing her mysterious route, she saw an angel seated sadly on the curb of a well. *'Who is that angel?'* she asked of her guide. *'It is,'* he replied, *'the angel-guardian of the sinner in whose lot you are interested. His soul is in this well, where it has a special Purgatory.'*

A SPIRIT ALL ON FIRE

At these words, Lidwina cast an inquiring glance at her angel; she desired to see that soul which was dear to her, and endeavour to release it from that frightful pit. Her angel, who understood her, having taken off the cover of the well, a cloud of flames, together with the most plaintive cries, came forth. *"Do you recognize that voice?'* said the angel to her. *'Alas! yes,'* answered the servant of God. *'Do you desire to see that soul?'* he continued. On her replying in the affirmative, he called him by his name; and immediately our virgin (Lidwina) saw appear at the mouth of the pit a spirit all on fire, resembling incandescent metal, which said to her in a voice scarcely audible, *'O Lidwina, servant of God, who will give me to contemplate the face of the Most High?'*

"The sight of this soul, a prey to the most terrible torment of fire, gave our saint such a shock that the cincture which she wore around her body was rent in twain; and, no longer able to endure the sight, she awoke suddenly from her ecstasy. The persons present, perceiving her fear, asked her its cause. *'Alas!"* she replied, *'how frightful are the prisons of Purgatory! It was to assist the souls that I consented to descend thither. Without this motive, if the whole world were given to me, I would not undergo the terror which that horrible spectacle inspired.'*

"Some days later, the same angel whom she had seen so dejected appeared to her with a joyful countenance; he told her that the soul of his protege' had left the pit and passed into the ordinary Purgatory. This partial alleviation did not suffice the charity of Lidwina; she continued to pray for the poor patient, and to apply to

him the merits of her sufferings, until she saw the gates of Heaven opened to him." (Purgatory, by Fr. F. X. Schouppe, S.J., p. 16-19)

THERE ARE COUNTLESS SOULS BESEECHING OUR HELP! WILL YOU HELP THEM OR WILL YOU JUST LET THEM BURN?

Purgatory Stories (4)

God permits a soul to appear so that it can be released from Purgatory, or at least, that its suffering be greatly lessened, and a pious, compassionate person is more likely to respond to its requests by the offering of fervent sacrifices, sufferings and prayers which are the means which help the poor souls. In other words, such souls are "saintly" persons, without of course ever becoming canonized Saints.

One such soul is Eugenie von der Leyen (1867-1929) who kept a diary of the appearances of the souls in Purgatory to her. Eugenie was a well educated woman of high German nobility; in fact Eugenie bore the title of princess and lived in the ancestral castle at Waal, Bavaria, Germany. By order of her confessor, she kept diary of her contacts with the poor souls, which after her death was handed over to Bishop Eugenio Pacelli, who later became Pope Pius XII.

The Shepherd named Fritz –From the diary of Eugenie von der Leyen, 1923.

June 11, 1923. At awakening, a long grayish form over me, completely nebulous; I can't say whether man or woman, but unsympathetic; I am very frightened.

June 14. The phantom was already in my room when I wanted to sleep. Then I said my evening-prayer aloud, during which it came very near to me. If it hadn't been for his arms, it rather would seem a walking tree-trunk. It stayed perhaps twenty minutes, then came back at four o'clock.
June 16. It was very bad. It shook my shoulder. That is a horrible moment. I struck him and said: *"You may not touch*

me!" Where¬upon it withdrew in a corner. At my push, I didn't feel a body, it was like a humid, warm towel. I believed I couldn't stand such terror any longer.

June 18. Again this horrible thing; it wanted to clasp my neck. I prayed in fear and took the particle of the Cross [a holy relic she possessed] in my hand. Then it remained with me, staying upright and big before me. It didn't answer questions." then it went out through the door, which it left open.

June 19. I can recognize now that it is a man; he was only there for a short while.

June 21. The horrible man more than an hour during the night, went back and forth continuously. He has disheveled black hair and horrific eyes.

June 22. This man from one o'clock until past five with me, it was very bad. He repeatedly bowed over me and sat down at my bedside. I really wept for fear, then prayed the "hours" so that I didn't need to see him. Then he went again back and forth and moaned horribly. Now it seems to me I must know him, however I cannot find out who it is. I have become very cowardly, for many times it is really a decision for me to go to my room in the evening. Yet ordinarily I am able to fall asleep very well.

June 24. He came back, seized me at my shoulder. I said: *"Now tell me what you want and then don't come back."*
No answer; he went again through the room a couple of times and then was gone. My rest however was completely destroyed. At six in the morning he came back. In daylight he even looks more horrific, makes a disgusting impression, belongs to the dirtiest category of ghosts who have already come. I said: *"Don't disturb me, I want to prepare myself for holy Communion!"* Then he drew very near to me and lifted his hands imploringly. I was so sorry for him that I promised him a lot. Then I said: *"Can't you speak?"* Whereupon he shook his head. *"Do you have much to suffer?"* Now he moaned terribly. I gave him much holy water" and then he was gone.

June 27. He was there again, in the night. Seems to know me; I racked my brains as to who he might be. He is very unsympathetic.?

June 29. He was again in the room when I went to bed. It could be the murdered shepherd Fritz. I asked him at once, but he didn't react. I prayed with him, during which he fixed his eyes on me so angrily that I was really frightened. I asked him to go and then he went indeed.

June 30. He came very briefly; his moaning waked me up.

July 1. Again, I really believe it is shepherd Fritz. However his face is so black that I have difficulty recognizing him. But figure, nose, and eyes are wholly "he",as I saw him so many times in life.

July 2. He came back, didn't look so terribly wild anymore and stayed not for a long time. I addressed him as "shepherd Fritz," which he apparently found quite natural.

July 3. He came very briefly. I asked: *"Are you the murdered shepherd Fritz?"*Then he said distinctly: *"Yes!"*

July 4. He came to me in the morning, looked sadly at me and went away soon, answered nothing, too.

July 5. Now it struck me that everything about him is clearer. During prayer, he made the Sign of the Cross.

July 6. I am very happy for he can speak now. I asked him: *"Why do you always come to me?"* He: *"Because you have always prayed for me."* (That is right, for I had always been sorry for the poor fellow; he always looked so particular, even as a boy.)

I: *"Then what saved you?"*

He: *"Insight and repentance."*

I: *"Weren't you dead immediately?"*

He: *"No"*
I: *"Will you be released soon?"*

He: *"Not by far."*

Then I gave him permission to continue coming to me, if it does him well. How remarkable it is, that someone who was so rude in life speaks like that when separated from his body. Now I am not frightened by him anymore, and would like to help him as best I can. How merciful is the good Lord!

July 8. He came very briefly.

July 9. He came at 6:00am and by doing so woke me up. Otherwise I had overslept.

I: *"Is it so important for you that I go to holy Mass?"*

He: *"That way, you can help me a lot."*

July 11. Only came very briefly.

July 12. We prayed together:

I: *"Then what do you have to suffer?"*

He: *"I am burning!"*

Then he came up to me and before I could defend myself, he pressed a finger on my hand. I was frightened so much and it hurt me so much, that I screamed. Now I have a red burn which I hope will heal soon. It is a very strange feeling, to have this visible mark from the other world.
July 24. Shepherd Fritz and the other one came two times in the night, all silent, but [the new one] not very pleasant.

July 29. Nothing special to mention. Now these two are coming

every night. The new one looks horrible, while shepherd Fritz becomes ever more bright!!

August 10. Shepherd Fritz drew so near to me again, but looked very friendly. So I said to him, *"Don't you have to suffer so much anymore?"*

He: *"No."* and

I: *"Can you pray for me yet?"*

He: *"No."* and

I: *"Where are you then all the time?"*

He: *"In the forlornness."*

I: *"Will you still come often to me?"*

He: *"No."* and

I: *"Why not?"*

He: *"I am not allowed to any more!" and*

I: *"Have I been able to help you?"*

He: *"Yes."* Then he was gone….

To close this remarkable account, Father Sebastian Wieser, Eugenie's parish priest and confessor, comments:

"The behavior of this apparition is like the echo of his earthly life. I have known shepherd Fritz well -he was like a "billygoat" *in the parish. In him, the greatness of the mercy of God really manifests itself. Rarely did he come to church. He had an only son, who in school became well known for his meanness, falsehood, and deceptions and caused many troubles to his teachers and those in authority over him. When the boy had to be punished at school, the*

father pulled out all the stops of his indignation over the schoolmaster and priest. I prophesied at that time that someday the father himself would get a beating from this only son!

When this son was seventeen years old and was big and quite strong, he beat his father to death at around midnight …. Nobody knew if Fritz was dead immediately or if he came to for a moment. The latter seems to have been the case. The murderer had knocked him down in the hay-barn and abandoned him to his fate. Only in the morning was the dead man discovered ….On the sixth of July he states that: "…insight and repentance" *have saved him from damnation! On the twelfth day of July he says, "I am burning!" and presses a finger on the hand of the princess, which leaves a red burn which I have seen myself."*
~Father Sebastian Wieser.

<u>Purgatory Stories (5)</u>

From the manuscript of Sister M. de L.C., written from 1874-1890.

To get an idea of how Purgatory is arranged, we can get a good glimpse of it from a nun from France who had died on February 22, 1871 at the age of 36, and 2-1/2 years later (in November 1873) she began appearing from Purgatory to a fellow nun in her convent, named Sister M. de L.C (name kept anonymous in the manuscript to protect the nuns identity, as the manuscript was published while the nun was still living) as related in the booklet "An Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory". Published by The Reparation Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Inc., 2002:

"I can tell you about the different degrees of Purgatory because I have passed through them. In the great Purgatory there are several stages. In the lowest and most painful, it is like a temporary hell, and here there are the sinners who have committed terrible crimes during life and whose death surprised them in that state. It was almost a miracle that they were saved, and often by the prayers of holy parents or other pious persons. Sometimes they did not even have time to confess their sins and the

world thought them lost, but God, whose mercy is infinite, gave them at the moment of death the contrition necessary for their salvation on account of one or more good actions which they performed during life. For such souls, Purgatory is terrible. It is a real hell with this difference, that in hell they curse God, whereas we bless Him and thank Him for having saved us.

Next to these come the souls, who though they did not com¬mit great crimes like the others, were indifferent to God. They did not fulfill their Easter duties and were also converted at the point of death. Many were unable to receive Holy Communion. They are in Purgatory for the long years of indifference. They suffer unheard of pains and are abandoned either without prayers or if they are said for them, they are not allowed to profit by them. There are in this stage of Purgatory religious of both sexes, who were tepid, neglectful of their duties, indifferent towards Jesus, also priests who did not exercise their sacred ministry with the reverence due to the Sovereign Majesty and who did not instill the love of God sufficiently into the souls confided to their care. I was in this stage of Purgatory.

In the second Purgatory are the souls of those who died with venial sins not fully expiated before death, or with mortal sins that have been forgiven but for which they have not made entire satisfaction to the Divine Justice. In this part of Purgatory, there are also different degrees according to the merits of each soul.

Thus the Purgatory of the consecrated souls or of those who have received more abundant graces, is longer and far more painful than that of ordinary people of the world.

Lastly, there is the Purgatory of desire which is called the Threshold. *Very few escape this. To avoid it altogether, one must ardently desire Heaven and the vision of God. That is rare, rarer than people think, because even pious people are afraid of God and have not, therefore, a sufficiently strong desire of going to Heaven. This Purgatory has its very painful martyrdom like the others. The deprivation of the sight of our loving Jesus adds to the intense suffering."*

Another explanation of the levels in Purgatory from this same book:

Retreat, August 1878:

"Great sinners who were indifferent towards God, and religious who were not what they should have been are in the lowest stage of Purgatory. While they are there, the prayers offered up for them are not applied to them. Because they have ignored God during their life, He now in His turn leaves them abandoned in order that they may repair their neglectful and worthless lives. While on earth one truly cannot picture or imagine what God really is, but we (in Purgatory) know and understand Him for what He is, because our souls are freed from all the ties that fettered them and prevented them from realizing the holiness and majesty of God and His great mercy. We are martyrs, consumed as it were by love. An irresistible force draws us towards God who is our center, but at the same time another force thrusts us back to our place of expiation.

We are in the state of being unable to satisfy our longings. Oh, what a suffering that is, but we desire it and there is no murmuring against God here. We desire only what God wants. You on earth, however, cannot possibly understand what we have to endure. I am much relieved as I am no longer in the fire. I have now only the insatiable desire to see God, a suffering cruel enough indeed, but I feel that the end of my exile is at hand and that I am soon to leave this place where I long for God with all my heart. I know it well, I feel more at ease, but I cannot tell you the day or the hour of my release. God alone knows that. It may be that I have still many years of longing for Heaven. Continue to pray; I will repay you later on, though I do pray a great deal for you now."

Why is it that I pray for you with less fervor than I pray for others and that often I forget to recommend you?

"Do not trouble yourself about that. It is a punishment for me.

Even if you prayed more I should not be any the more relieved. God wills it thus. If He wants you to pray more He will inspire you to do so. I repeat again, do not be worried about me. You will never see me in my sufferings. Later on, when your soul is stronger, you will see souls in Purgatory and very awful ones, but let this not frighten you. God will then give you the neces¬sary courage and all that you need to accomplish His holy will."

Is this not a punishment?

"No, certainly not, I am here for my relief and for your sanctification. If you would but pay a little more attention to what I say.

That is true but these happenings are so extraordinary that I do not know what to make of them; it is not an ordinary thing to hear you in this way.

I understand well your difficulty and I am aware of your sufferings on this account. However, if God wishes it and it relieves me, you will have pity on me, will you not? When I am released you will see that I will do far more for you than you have ever done for me. I already pray much for you."

Where is Sister –?

"In the lowest Purgatory, *where she receives no benefit from anyone's prayers. God is often displeased, if one may speak thus, when many religious come to die, because He has called these souls to Himself that they might serve Him faithfully on earth and go straight to Heaven at the moment of death, but because of their infidelity, they have to stay long in Purgatory – far longer than people in the world who have not had so many graces."*

1879, Retreat in September:

"We see St. Michael *as we see the angels. He has no body. He comes to get the souls that have finished their purification. It is he who conducts them to Heaven. He is among the* Seraphim *as*

Monsignor said. He is the highest angel in Heaven. Our own Guardian Angels come to see us but St. Michael *is far more beautiful than they are. As to the Blessed Virgin, we see her in the body. She comes to Purgatory on her* feasts *and she goes back to Heaven with many souls. While she is with us we do not suffer. St. Michael accompanies her. When he comes alone, we suffer as usual. When I spoke to you of the great and the second Purgatory, it was to try to make you understand that there are different stages in Purgatory. Thus I call that stage of Purgatory* "great" *or* "worst" *where the most guilty souls are, and where I stayed for two years without being able to give a sign of the torments I was suffering. The year when you heard me groaning, when I began to speak to you, I was still in the same place.*

In the second Purgatory, *which is still Purgatory but very different from the first, one suffers a great deal, but less than in the great place of expiation. Then there is a* third stage, *which is the* Purgatory of desire, *where there is no fire. The souls who did not desire Heaven ardently enough, who did not love God suf¬ficiently, are there. It is there that I am at this moment. Further, in these three parts of Purgatory, there are many degrees of vari¬ation. Little by little, as the soul becomes purified, her sufferings are changed.*

You sometimes say to me that the perfecting of a soul is a long process and you are also astonished that after so many prayers, I am so long deprived of the sight of God. Alas, the perfecting of a soul does not take any less time in Purgatory than upon earth. There are a number of souls, but they are very few, who have only a few venial sins to expiate. These do not stay long in Purgatory. A few well-said prayers, a few sacrifices soon deliver them. But when there are souls like mine – and that is nearly all whose lives have been so empty and who paid little or no attention to their salvation – then their whole life has to be begun over again in this place of expiation. The soul has to perfect itself and love and desire Him, whom it did not love sufficiently on earth. This is the reason the deliverance of some souls is delayed. God has given me a very great grace in allowing me to ask for prayers. I did not

deserve it, but without this I would have remained like most of those here, for years and years more."

<u>Purgatory Stories (6)</u>

Another modern account: St Gemma Galgani obtains the relief of a soul in Purgatory.
St Gemma Galgani (1878-1903).

It is taken from the excellent book *"The Life of St Gemma Galgani"* by Venerable Father Germanus Ruoppolo C.P.
Gemma knew by Divine inspiration that in the Convent of Passionist Nuns at Corneto [Italy] there was a Religious Sister very dear to God who was near death. She asked me about it, and on my answering that it was so, she at once began to implore of Jesus to make that particular Religious expiate all her faults on her deathbed, so that breathing her last she might enter Paradise at once. Her prayer, at least in part, was heard. The Sister suffered greatly and died in a few months. Gemma told those in her home of it in order that they might pray for the deceased, and she gave her name, Maria Teresa of the Infant Jesus, as she was not known in Lucca. After her death, this soul appeared to her full of sorrow, imploring her help as she was undergoing great torments in Purgatory for certain defects.
Nothing more was needed to set all the fibers of Gemma's heart in motion. From that moment she gave herself no rest: she fervently offered prayers, tears and loving petitions to Our Lord.

"Jesus, save her," she was overheard to exclaim. *"Jesus, take Maria Teresa to Paradise without delay. She is a soul that is most dear to Thee. Let me suffer much for her; I want her to be in heaven."*

And during this time Gemma writes the following in her Diary:
"It was around 9:30 and I was reading; all of a sudden I am shaken by a hand resting gently on my left shoulder. I turn in fright; I was afraid and tried to call out, but I was held back. I turned and saw a person dressed in white; I recognized it was a woman; I looked and her expression assured me I had nothing to

fear: "Gemma," she said after some moments, "do you know me?" I said no, because that was the truth; she responded: *"I am Mother Maria Teresa of the Infant Jesus: I thank you so very much for the great con¬cern you have shown me because soon I shall be able to attain my eternal happiness."*

All this happened while I was awake and fully aware of myself. Then she added: *"Continue still, because I still have a few days of suffering."* And in so saying she caressed me and then went away. Her countenance, I must say, inspired much confidence in me. From that hour I redoubled my prayers for her soul, so that soon she should reach her objective; but my prayers are too weak; how I wish that for the souls in Purgatory my prayers should have the strength of the saints'."

And the dear victim of expiation suffered without ceasing for sixteen days, at the end of which God was pleased to accept her sacrifice and to release that soul. This is how Gemma herself told me of it:

"Toward half-past one it seemed to me that the Blessed Mother herself came to tell me that the hour was drawing to an end. Then almost immediately I thought I saw Sr. Maria Teresa coming toward me clad as a Passionist, accompanied by her Guardian Angel and by Jesus. Oh, how she was changed since the day I first saw her! Smiling, she drew close to me and said:
"I am truly happy, and I go to enjoy my Jesus forever."
She thanked me again. Then she made sign of bidding me good-bye with her hand, several times, and with Jesus and her Guardian Angel she flew to Heaven. It was about half-past two o'clock in the morning."

<u>Purgatory Stories (7)</u>

This true story is gotten from Fr. Paul O'Sullivan's Excellent Book READ ME, OR RUE IT.

THE POLISH PRINCE

A Polish prince who, for some political reason, had been exiled from his native country bought a beautiful castle and property in France. Unfortunately, he had lost the Faith of his childhood and was at the time of our story engaged in writing a book against God and the existence of a future life.

Strolling one evening in his garden, he came upon a poor woman weeping bitterly. He questioned her as to the cause of her grief. *"Ah! Prince,"* she replied, *"I am the wife of Jean [John] Marie, your former steward, who died two days ago. He was a good husband to me and a faithful servant to Your Highness. His sickness was long and I spent all our savings on the doctors, and now I have nothing left to get Masses said for his soul."*

The Prince, touched by her grief, said a few kind words and, though professing no longer to believe in a future life, gave her some gold coins to have Masses said for her husband's soul.

Some time after, it was again evening, and the Prince was in his study working feverishly at his hook. He heard a loud rap at the door and without looking up called out to the visitor to come in. The door slowly opened and a man entered and stood facing the Prince's writing table. On glancing up, what was not the Prince's amazement to see Jean Marie, his dead steward, looking at him with a sweet smile. *"Prince,"* he said, *"I come to thank you for the Masses you enabled my wife to have said for my soul. Thanks to the saving Blood of Christ, which was offered for me, I am now going to Heaven, but God has allowed me to come and thank you for your generous alms."* He then added impressively: *"Prince, there is a God, a future life, a Heaven and a Hell."* Having said these words he disappeared. The Prince fell upon his knees and poured forth a fervent Credo (I believe in God).